



ASSOCIATION OF KOSOVO MUNICIPALITIES

Bulletin

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July & August 2004

CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF KOSOVO MUNICIPALITIES ON "STANDARDS FOR KOSOVO" HELD IN OHRID ON 29-30 JULY.

Kosovo Municipalities have made much progress and have a key role in meeting standards for Kosovo



The Association of Kosovo Municipalities supported by KFOS, IFES Ltd and the Agency for Local Democracy organized a two day conference with municipal presidents and relevant actors, to review the meeting of responsibilities set by the "Standards for Kosovo". The conference aimed at preparing a "baseline assessment" on the actual position of municipalities regarding the agenda on "Standards for Kosovo" through a debate between municipal presidents, representatives of Chief Executives Collegium, and several international partners, in order to take necessary actions. There were present twenty-two municipal presidents and two chief executives as representatives of the two largest Albanian political parties and representatives of Serbs of Kosovo. Several other representatives were present in this conference, such as from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Public Services, UNMIK (SRSG Office), UNDP, OSCE, and IFES Ltd.

The AMK President and the Municipal President of Gjilan, Mr. Lutfi haziri, opened the conference with a discussion on standards with a municipal point of view. He stated that AMK has established a program to evaluate the standards issue in municipalities. This program has concluded that many municipalities have fulfilled some standards within the possibilities and competencies that they have.

The Advisor for Standards with the Office of Prime Minister, Mr. Zenuj Pajazitii, stated that as an official of the Government of Kosovo, he participated in this conference to support municipal-

ities in meeting the standards. According to him, municipalities have a crucial role in the fulfillment of standards, especially the Standard on Return. Different ways and mechanisms need to be found to implement standards; and this conference should be focused on determining the role of municipalities in the fulfillment of standards.

All participants debated in this conference on each standard trying to come to an understanding of finding the best ways of fulfilling standards on the local government point of view. Several conclusions were reached during this two day conference.

First, municipalities would like to revise and extend the assessment of their activities in relation to fulfilling standards and would appreciate donor support in conducting such a survey.

Second, municipalities believe that they have made considerable progress and that they are also critical to success in fulfillment of standards; they want to advertise their action.

It is proposed that a regular reporting mechanism be strengthened and that, in addition to formal reporting through the Ministry, the Association of Kosovo Municipalities has a role to provide regular information to the municipal representatives to the standards implementation commission. Third, the Association of Kosovo Municipalities would like to increase its activities with donors in order to stimulate economic development, a fundamental positive factor to the improvement of living conditions for all citizens of Kosovo.

AMK nominates its representatives for working groups on "Standards for Kosovo"

AMK leaders participated in the annual Conference of Local Governments held in Great Britain

Official visits of Association of Kosovo Municipalities representatives in USA and Sweden

AMK participates in the drafting of Framework on Reforms for Local Government in Kosovo

Cooperation agreement reached between AMK and Ministry of Transportation

AMK delegation participated in NALAS Conference in Slovenia

USAID selects six municipalities for its local government initiative

The democracy is best determined by local authorities

AMK leaders participated in the annual Conference of Local Governments held in Great Britain



The Association of Kosovo Municipalities, represented by its President, Mr. Lutfi Haziri, and the Executive Director, Mr. Sazan Ibrahim, participated in the 2004 Annual Conference on "Making the Difference: Public Local Services", organized by the Association of Local Governments of England and Wales. Different themes were debated in this conference, such as: "The future of Local Governments", "Advisor-citizen-customer-voter relations", "Local Strategies - national priorities", "Roads - transforming the local urban plan", etc. Representatives of AMK participated intensively in this conference by presenting the achievements and challenges of local government in Kosovo. They also visited the Municipality of Arun, where they met high level officials and exchanged experiences of local self-governance. They also met with leaders of the UK Local Government International Bureau (LGIB) that gave support to the visit.

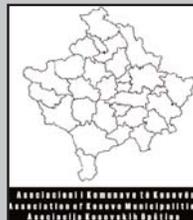
Official visits of Association of Kosovo Municipalities representatives in USA and Sweden

Vice President of AMK and Municipal President of Skënderaj, Mr. Ramadan Gashi, visited the United States for different official meetings. Mr. Gashi met with the Director of Municipalities League in Lister City, several officials of the Municipality of Denville, etc. Mr. Gashi presented the hosts of these meetings with the activities and achievements of AMK. Mr. Gashi was welcomed with exceptional interest and great publicity. Mr. Gashi paid visit to different factories and to the Doctor's Club that handled the surgery of a child from Skënderaj. Doctors of this club agreed to continue this important and necessary cooperation.

The AMK Board member and the Municipal President of Shtime, Mr. Fehmi Mujota, visited Sweden where he met with representatives of the Union of Municipalities of Krono Berg. Mr. Mujota affirmed the visit of a Swedish delegation for the Union of Municipalities of Krono Berg during 25 October - 10 November.



AMK nominates its representatives for working groups on "Standards for Kosovo"



The AMK Board nominated during its regular meeting on 24/07/2004 the representative for the working groups on "Standards for Kosovo", as follows:

1. Self-Government Institutions
2. Rule of Law
3. Freedom of Movement and Use of Language
4. Return
5. Economy
6. Property Rights
7. Dialogue
8. KPC

Ismet Beqiri
Ramadan Gashi
Mursel Ibrahim
Lutfi Haziri
Fadil Ferati
Adem Salihaj
Fehmi Mujota
Ismet Beqiri

AMK participates in the drafting of Framework on Reforms for Local Government in Kosovo

The working group on Local Government, co-headed by PISGs and UNMIK, comprised of the Office of Prime Minister, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Association of Kosovo Municipalities, the Ministry of Public Services, UNMIK, community representatives and international experts from USAID, Council of Europe, OSCE, is established with the aim to prepare a framework on reforms for local self-government. The working group was established with the request of the Presidential Declaration of the Security Council on 30 April 2004 for "efficient local governance through devolution of non-reserved central responsibilities to local governments" and with the invitation of interested parties in Kosovo to develop concrete reform proposals.

Cooperation agreement reached between AMK and Ministry of Transportation

The Association of Kosovo Municipalities and the Ministry of Transportation reached an agreement on mutual action in order to maintain, regulate and further develop bus stations in the municipalities of Kosovo.

This agreement states that municipalities and MTPT agree that bus stations are public goods and their existence and function is necessary. This agreement determines that municipalities are responsible for the management of bus stations, while MTPT will take care of maintenance and law implementation on the functioning of bus stations and interurban and international transportation.

AMK and MTPT agreed to request from KTA that in its operational policies of privatization, bus stations be separate from transportation and maintenance operations, and that the privatization process be not applied to bus stations. AMK and MTPT agreed to establish a Regulatory Body of bus stations to be determined by a special act of MTPT in cooperation with the Association. Pursuant to this agreement and applicable laws, MTPT will issue a special regulation on the functioning of bus stations. The agreement was signed by the President of the Association of Kosovo Municipalities, Mr. Lutfi Haziri, and the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Transportation and Post-Telecommunications, Mr. Gëzim Pula.

AMK delegation participated in NALAS Conference in Slovenia



AMK delegation comprised of the President of AMK Commission on Finances and the Municipal President of Istog, Mr. Fadil Ferati, the Municipal President of Dragash, Mr. Halim Shemsedini, and the AMK Communication Manager, Mr. Arsim Osmani, participated in the international workshop "The Role of Local Government Associations, management of public finances in the local level in South-East Europe".

The two-day workshop was held in Bled, Slovenia, with the support of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Local Government and Public Services Reform Initiative, Institute for Open Society - Budapest, USAID and Association of Slovenian Municipalities and Towns.

The role of local government association was debated during this conference regarding the capacity building, service provision, employment in local government associations of South East Europe, and local finance management.

The Kosovo delegation participated in all sessions by giving its own contribution and experience. They informed the participants in local authority operation, the work of AMK and public finance management from local authorities.

USA assists municipalities in raising quality of municipal services

"The Government of USA through USAID will cooperate with all municipal assemblies of Kosovo to raise the quality of municipal services provided to citizens, by engaging staff as advisors and consultants for municipal management" - stated the new USAID director, Ken Jakashita, in the presentation of the new project Local Government Initiative. "USAID, during my three-year term in Kosovo, will continue to support the Kosovo institutions with several programs even though the implementation of this support will be slightly different"- stated the new USAID director on the implementation of projects.

The AMK Executive Director, Mr. Sazan Ibrahim, stated that this project aims at increasing the transparency of municipalities to citizens and local economic development". The Project representative, Mr. Kristopher Kacnarski, added that even though there will be some selection among municipalities, all Kosovo municipalities will have access to the support from these teams.

USAID selects six municipalities for its local government initiative

USAID selected Gjakovë, Gjilan, Pejë, Podujevë, Shtërcë, and Suharekë to host the advisors that will work with the local government administration in the program on proficiency enforcement of local governments in carrying out their duties and providing good services for citizens. These municipalities will sign a MoU with USAID's Local Government Initiative that will also provide terms of participation.

"These municipalities, during application and interview from our project experts, have shown an immense interest in hosting advisors and a great willingness in improving their administration operation"- stated Dr. Ken Jakashita, Director of USAID Mission in Kosovo.

"In addition, the Local Government Initiative will use these municipalities as regional headquarters to provide information and experience for all Kosovo municipalities. Local government offers the closest direct contact point with citizens, thus we believe that this program will help in the development of municipalities to answer your needs". LGI, supported by USA Government through USAID, is a new three-year program for the improvement of efficiency, transparency and responsibility of local governments in Kosovo. This Initiative will focus on the improvement of municipal management and governance, stimulation of local economic development and increased level of public participation in local government.

United States Agency for
International Development - Kosovo

Building a democratic, economically sustainable Kosovo,
with equal opportunities and rights for all its citizens.



THE ASSOCIATION OF KOSOVO MUNICIPALITIES CELEBRATES THREE YEARS OF ESTABLISHMENT AND ACTIVITIES

The democracy is best determined by local authorities

The Association of Kosovo Municipalities celebrated its third year of establishment and activities in a cocktail party where participated many municipal presidents, chief executives of Kosovo municipalities, representatives of local and international organizations, representatives of liaison offices in Pristina, such as U.S. Office, Great Britain Office, German Office, etc.



The President of AMK, Mr. Lutfi Haziri, welcomed the participants and stated that three years ago when the Association was established, it started with a totally new experience for Kosovo, as a union that brought together different ethnic and political groups.

"Facing different challenges, we have walked in a pace with other institutions. Being part of South East Europe and having much collaboration with different European countries, is a proof of our work and achievement as an Association" - stated Mr. Haziri. He added that "we have accomplished to build capacities and cooperation between different municipalities and ethnic groups" to further our objective of continuing this success in the future.

"There will be future cooperation with municipalities of this region, Europe and USA".

The advisor to the President of Kosovo, Mr. Halit Muharremi, expressed his satisfaction of being among municipal representatives by evaluating the work of local authorities since the local governments are the first ones that face the problems of citizens.

The Minister Bexhet Brajshori stated that "it is a personal satisfaction to congratulate the third year of AMK establishment and the municipal representatives on behalf of the Government of Kosovo. This is the best way to bring closer local authorities in working towards the so-called positive functioning, the functioning of local governments".

The Head of German Office, Mr. Peter Rondolf, talked on behalf on the Offices of the Quint in Prishtina, and stated that "the democracy is best determined by local authorities; the government serves the citizens not vice versa. The Kosovo citizens need to know if there is progress in local government. This will be seen if there will be achieved any success in the return issue, which is totally dependent of local authorities and is one of the most important standards for Kosovo".

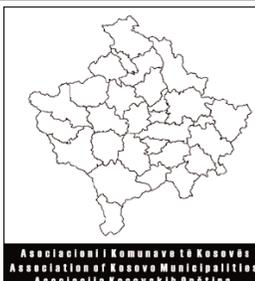


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Observer Status



Asociacioni i Komunave të Kosovës
 Association of Kosovo Municipalities
 Asociacija Kosovskih Opština



Permanent Member